

NYUMBANI ORPHANAGE
ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, this week here in Washington, many Members of this House are joining together to commemorate the annual benefit for the Nyumbani Orphanage for HIV positive children in Nairobi, Kenya, which recently celebrated its 11th anniversary. I have spoken on this floor numerous times to note the enormous achievements and contributions of the Nyumbani program, and I know that I speak for every House Member, regardless of party, when I offer our congratulations and our encouragement for this program to continue to serve the children of Kenya.

I particularly want to extend our congratulations to Father Angelo D'Agostino, SJ, MD and his outstanding staff who have built this unique facility for HIV positive children in the midst of AID-ravaged sub-Saharan Africa. I had the honor to visit Nyumbani several years ago, as have several other Members of the House and Senate, and I know we all salute Father D'Ag, his staff, and the children for the great work they are doing. I particularly want to congratulate the children who are members of the "Watoto wa Mungu" singing group whose recording "Shauri Yakou" has been No. 1 on the Kameme FM Swahili hit parade for four weeks now. The group also participated in a rock concert organized by the Kenya United States Association with some of the leading Kenyan singers and musicians.

One of the great reasons to celebrate this year is that for the first time, the Nyumbani program is receiving enthusiastic support from the new Kenyan government of President Emilio Mwai Kibaki, who was elected last December. I know that there was a great deal of frustration in the past at the reluctance of the national government to provide leadership on the issues of AIDS prevention and treatment, and at its unwillingness to provide the program with the kind of support—financial, land, technical assistance—that is needed to serve the very large HIV positive population. Under President Kibaki, the government has sent the first financial assistance to Nyumbani to help with its medical and education programs. I also understand the government is working diligently to acquire the anti-retroviral drugs needed to provide effective treatment to the HIV population.

President Kibaki and those in his Administration should note that we in the Congress recognize and appreciate his leadership in helping to address the very serious AIDS problem that confronts not only Kenya, but much of sub-Saharan Africa.

It was not long ago that it was a challenge to even operate such programs in many African nations, including Kenya. "When Nyumbani was first established," Father D'Ag has written, "very few of us thought these children would grow to adulthood, but through all your love, prayers, care, attention and valued contributions and donations, we are keeping the kids alive, happy and educated. We expect them to become valued members of Kenyan society." To the extent that AIDS awareness, prevention and treatment becomes a

critical initiatives of these governments, the children of Africa face a very different and more hopeful future, as do their countries.

Now it is the turn of the United States to follow through on our commitment to greatly expand our AIDS assistance programs to Africa. Although this program was cited as a primary foreign policy and humanitarian initiative by President Bush earlier this year, there are many concerns that insufficient funding will flow to the frontline efforts, like Nyumbani, that are delivering services and health care, but are close to being overwhelmed by the need. We have promised to substantially increase aid to Africa for AIDS prevention and treatment, and I know that the child of Nyumbani, and we in this chamber, are waiting to see if that promise assistance actually reaches the people in need.

The people of Nyumbani continue to raise money through their "Nyumbani Gift Shop" that sells locally made items and gives all profits to the Nyumbani project. And of course, efforts to secure private contributions and donations to enable Nyumbani, like the dinner Wednesday night, continue in the United States and worldwide. More assistance for this program is always needed, and welcome, as are instruments for the band the children want to form.

So while some have offered rhetoric about addressing the AIDS crisis in Africa, Dr. D'Ag and the men and women of the Nyumbani program continue to achieve dramatic results on the ground, every day. They are receiving important new assistance from the Kenyan government, and hopefully will soon benefit from the promised U.S. assistance for the Africa AIDS initiative. Visiting this program was a moving and inspirational day, and I hope that every Member will do whatever is possible to ensure that the Nyumbani Orphanage, and the Lea Toto community outreach program, are able to continue their work towards making Africa AIDS-free and assuring that those who have become HIV positive live longer and more productive lives.

Congratulations to Dr. D'Ag, the Nyumbani and Lea Toto staff, and especially, to the children and families of Nyumbani.

THE TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2003

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the authorization of an automatic cost-of-living (COLA) pay increase for Members of Congress contained within H.R. 2989. It is essential that Members have the opportunity to consider a pay raise independently of funding for important transportation projects in their districts.

I was disappointed with the automatic inclusion of a Congressional pay raise in the bill and I voted against the rule to allow consideration of H.R. 2989 with the inclusion of this provision. Unfortunately, the motion to prevent consideration of the bill failed 235–178. While I did not support the pay raise, I ultimately voted for the bill because it included \$5.2 mil-

lion for transportation projects in North Dakota. I am excited that my State received these funds for important road and transit improvements, but I am also disappointed that I was unable to consider the Congressional pay raise as a measure separate from Department of Transportation funding.

A fiscally responsible Congress should consider the automatic COLA pay increase independently of funding for other programs. It is my hope that Congress will take steps to ensure separate consideration for any increases in the future.

H. CON. RES. 284

HON. SHERROD BROWN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 284, expressing the sense of Congress that the United States actively support Taiwan's membership in the United Nations and other international organizations.

A number of countries have asked the United Nations to reconsider U.N. Resolution 2758, which has not resolved the issue of Taiwan's representation in the U.N. This resolution gave what has been called the "China Seat" to the People's Republic of China and excluded Taiwan from membership.

For thirty years, Taiwan's 23 million people have had no representation at the U.N. This is a violation of the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Taiwan does not seek the expulsion of the People's Republic of China, but asks that it be given its own voice in U.N. matters. Taiwan and the PRC can both be members of the U.N. The precedent exists: East and West Germany in the past, and North and South Korea in the present.

U.N. membership does not threaten or endanger reunification of Taiwan and China. In recent years, Taiwan has permitted banks and financial institutions to open offices in China. Taiwan has welcomed mainland journalists and eased restrictions on mainland spouses of Taiwan residents. It is conceivable that political relations will improve if Taiwan is given U.N. membership.

Taiwan's return to the U.N. will benefit all nations, especially the 23 million people of Taiwan. They deserve to have a voice in the U.N. and to be treated in the same manner as all other people in the world.

DEMOCRACY DAY AND A FREE CUBA

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, September 17, the U.S. Constitution turned 216 years old, and we celebrated Democracy Day, commemorating its signing. Our National Archives held an unveiling ceremony, where the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights are now presented in a new, clearer display in the rotunda. There, President Bush, U.S. Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Senate and